

~~SECRET~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

COPY NO. 2

OCI NO. 8736

7 August 1953

# CURRENT INTELLIGENCE WEEKLY



(b) (1)  
(b) (3)  
(C)

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

OFFICE OF CURRENT INTELLIGENCE

~~SECRET~~

APPROVED FOR RELEASE  
DATE: JUL 2005

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

JCB

22 8507

~~SECRET~~

## POLITICAL PROSPECTS IN IRAN

Approval of Prime Minister Mossadeq's unconstitutional plan to dissolve the present Majlis is expected in the nationwide referendum which is to be completed in Iran on 10 August. The Tehran area, which voted on 3 August, has already given overwhelming support to the proposal. The prime minister has publicly stated that general elections will be held, but there probably will be considerable delay.

Mossadeq decreed that the referendum would be by a non-secret ballot. Since voters must include full identification on their ballots, there is little doubt that the referendum will approve dissolution of the Majlis, the constitutional prerogative of the shah.

Mullah Kashani and other opposition leaders have called for a boycott of the referendum. Abstention, however, will not block Mossadeq, as he has the vote of his own followers and the full support of the Tudeh. (b) (1)  
(b) (3)  
(C)

Mossadeq has promised elections for a new Majlis following the referendum, but normally several months are needed to conduct the actual balloting. Rigged elections are standard practice in Iran. During the last elections, the Mossadeq government used both legal and illegal means to ensure victory for its candidates, yet it did not secure complete control of the legislative body. There is nothing in the situation today suggesting that Mossadeq could secure the election of a more docile Majlis.

Though the Tudeh is supporting the prime minister in the referendum, in a parliamentary election it would run its own candidates against Mossadeq and some would probably be successful. In a new Majlis, if and when assembled, Mossadeq accordingly would find himself faced with a small but militant Tudeh bloc, as well as a rightist opposition, whose election he could not entirely prevent.

Tribal chiefs, army officers, the landed gentry, and the supporters of Mullah Kashani could, if united, defeat Mossadeq. In the rural districts where Communists are increasing their activities, the landlords still control most of the peasant

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

vote. Many of their candidates could be defeated only through wholesale terrorism on the part of the pro-Mossadeq forces.

Thus, Mossadeq might increase his own support in a new Majlis, but the anticipated Tudeh and conservative opposition would not lend themselves to easy manipulation. The Tudeh would probably support his anti-Western policies, prod him on to more extremist action, awaiting the day when it could take over. Tudeh representation in a Mossadeq cabinet is not an impossibility.

Faced with the prospects of a new Majlis not fully subservient, Mossadeq will accordingly tend to procrastinate on the elections. Aware, however, that the expiration in January of the powers voted him by the Majlis will remove the last vestiges of legality from his position, he will probably call for elections at the last possible moment.

The prime minister's flagrant violation of the secret ballot in the referendum seems to indicate uncertainty over his actual popular backing, although he insists that the people will support him fully. The considerable conservative and rightist plotting to remove him may increase in the coming months, particularly if he takes more arbitrary action.

~~SECRET~~